

4/16/12 - Monday, April 16, 2012

**CITY OF EAU CLAIRE
PLAN COMMISSION MINUTES**

Meeting of April 16, 2012

City Hall, Council Chambers, 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Messrs. FitzGerald, Kayser, Duax, Larson, Weld, Pearson, Hibbard, Klinkhammer

Staff Present: Messrs. Tufte, Noel, Genskow, Ivory, LeBrun

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Kayser.

**1. REZONING (Z-1504-12) “ R-1 to P-Public, Pinehurst Water Reservoir; and
SITE PLAN (PZ-1202) “ Communication Tower, Pinehurst Water Reservoir**

Mr. Tufte presented a request to rezone the Pinehurst water reservoir from R-1 to P-Public and to approve a site plan for a new communication tower. The tower is required as part of the Public Safety radio system upgrade and to allow for WiMax wireless. The freestanding grey colored monopole will be 100TM tall with a 20TM lighting rod on top. Access to the site is off Freedom Drive. The tower site will be enclosed by fencing and an equipment shelter will be provided. The tower is within the Airport Approach Zone and will have to be approved by Eau Claire County. Other approvals from the FCC and FAA are also needed. The Waterways and Parks Commission recommended approval of the project.

John LeBrun, with City of Eau Claire Information System, explained how CESA 10 is involved in the Chippewa Valley InterNetworking Consortium (CINC). He said the tower is waiting for FAA approval of the height.

Mr. FitzGerald motioned to recommend approval of the rezoning and the site plan with the condition as noted in the staff report. Mr. Hibbard seconded and the motion carried.

**2. REZONING (Z-1505-12) “ TR-1A to P-Public, Mt. Washington Water Reservoir; and
SITE PLAN (PZ-1203) “ Communication Tower, Mt. Washington Water Reservoir**

Mr. Tufte presented the request to rezone the Mt. Washington water reservoir from Temporary R-1A to P-Public and to approve the site plan for a new communication tower. The tower will be 100TM tall with a 20TM lighting rod. The tower proposal is similar to the last item, except the site is not in an Airport Approach Zone.

Mr. LeBrun with City of Eau Claire Information System stated the tower will have fencing and security cameras.

Mr. FitzGerald motioned to recommend approval of the rezoning and the site plan. Mr. Klinkhammer seconded and the motion carried.

3. SITE PLAN (PZ-1204) “ Communication Tower, south of Mt. Tom

Mr. Tufte presented the request to approve a site plan for a new communication tower. The existing tower will be replaced with a new 180TM tall tower plus a 20TM lighting rod. The site will be enclosed and an equipment structure will be provided. The site is within the Airport Approach Zone and will need to be reviewed by the County. The City Waterways and Parks Commission recommended approval of the project at Mt. Tom Park.

Mr. LeBrun, with City of Eau Claire Information System, said the existing tower is in a state of failure and the new tower must meet more stringent standards. The City received FAA approval. The tower will be built for co-location possibilities.

Mr. FitzGerald motioned to recommend approval of the site plan with the condition as noted in the staff report. Mr. Pearson seconded and the motion carried.

4. SITE PLAN (PZ-1205) “ Communication Pod on Oakwood Hills Water Tower

Mr. Tufte presented the request to approve a site plan in a P-Public District for a communication pod to be placed on top of the Oakwood Hills water tower. The location is on Oak Knoll Drive. The 18TM-11 tall stackable communications pod tower will be placed on top of the existing water tower. This eliminates the need to erect a new freestanding tower. A 20TM lighting rod will be attached. The equipment enclosure should be screened with a front landscaping buffer.

Mr. FitzGerald motioned to recommend approval of the site plan subject to the screening condition. Mr. Weld seconded and the motion carried.

5. SITE PLAN (PZ-1206) “ Sign, Putnam Heights School

Mr. Ivory presented the request to approve a site plan for a ground sign with an electronic message center display at Putnam Heights School, 633 W. MacArthur Avenue. The Eau Claire Area School District will use the message center sign for event notification and student public recognition. The proposed sign is 33.6 square feet and 6TM-1.5 tall. Signs are allowed in P-Public Districts and no specific sign standards exist. However, staff examines adjacent areas and relies on their sign standards for compatibility. Staff has

concerns over traffic and pedestrian safety, impacts on abutting residential properties, and the possible precedent this might set allowing electronic signs in residential areas. A display dwell time of 60 seconds is recommended to reduce driver distraction and the impacts on dwellings in the vicinity and the neighborhood. A number of other conditions are recommended such as maintaining setbacks, hours of operation, dimming lights after hours, no animation or flashing messages, and removal of an existing ground sign.

Charlie Kramer, with Eau Claire Area School District, stated the sign is a little larger than referenced ordinance but it could be redesigned if so needed. He said he could not find any information on vehicle crashes or pedestrian accidents within 15 mph school zones directly related to electronic message center signs. They are also concerned about safety and the signs can be programmed to help protect from driver distraction. He noted these signs are popular in other school districts. Utilizing these they would make advertising easier then setting up and taking down homemade/banner signs.

Commissioners discussed the electronic message center sign proposal. They had concerns that the project did not require notification of abutting property owners, possible impacts to traffic distraction, and negative precedent setting in residential areas if the sign was allowed.

Mr. Larson and Mr. Hibbard were opposed to message center signs in residential areas. Mr. Pearson thought it would cause more negative impacts than positive. Mr. FitzGerald was not opposed to the sign, so long as display times were longer, but was concerned about distractions. Mr. Klinkhammer stated neighbors should have a chance to comment, and display times should be longer. He said there is a benefit for school>

Mr. Klinkhammer motioned to recommend approval of the site plan. Mr. FitzGerald seconded. Mr. Hibbard moved to postpone all agenda items regarding the School District™s electronic message center sign projects, so that property owners within 175™ of the school locations are notified for public hearings. Mr. Duax seconded and the motion carried. Mr. Larson voted nay.

6. SITE PLAN (PZ-1207) “ Sign, Sherman Elementary School

This item was postponed per the motion found in item #5.

7. SITE PLAN (PZ-1208) “ Sign, Robbins Elementary School

This item was postponed per the motion found in item #5.

8. SITE PLAN (PZ-1209) “ Sign, Delong Middle School

This item was postponed per the motion found in item #5.

9. SITE PLAN (SP-1213) “ Four Plex, Clearwater Ridge Court

Mr. Tuft presented a request to approve a site plan for a 4-plex by Janke Premiere Properties. The location is on the north end of Clearwater Ridge Court. The 4-plex is similar to other 4-plexes nearby. The driveway access should come off Clearwater Ridge Court to take advantage of grades and storm sewer infrastructure. The existing 3-stall parking lot will be expanded to 7 stalls. A parking lot cross-easement agreement will be needed for the three lots it crosses over. Additional buffering is provided along Windsor Drive. Staff recommends approval subject to conditions.

Bob Janke stated the 4-plex decks are built with treated wood and are not meant to be painted in the first year. He stated some of the proposed trees near the shared parking may have to be pushed back for snow clearing.

Mr. Klinkhammer motioned to approve the site plan with staff™s conditions. Mr. Duax seconded and motioned carried.

10. DISCUSSION/DIRECTION

A. Sub-area Plans “ Meeting with Towns

Mr. Tuft stated Messrs. Larson, Kayser, Duax, and Klinkhammer will be at the April 26 meeting with the townships to discuss sub-area planning. County planning directors have been invited and were encouraged to bring their county administrators and a board member. This next joint planning effort is a continuation from the recent Intergovernmental Agreement and amendments to comprehensive plans and subdivisions codes. The purpose of this first meeting is to decide together how to move forward and include the public. Sub-area planning, at the earliest, could be started this fall after conducting an Issues Analysis. Sub-area plans will address areas within the Urban Sewer Service Area where the City and towns anticipate growth and future annexations. Additionally, the meeting is to discuss joint review of site plans along important corridors, like U.S. Highway 53.

B. Code Compliance Items

None.

C. Future Agenda Items

Mr. Pearson emphasized the need for economic preparedness planning for times during financial recession. Building local community resiliency capacity, such as providing local food, water accessibility, and energy security are important during times of financial uncertainty. Planning can help insulate against economic woes and the impacts they have on communities such as poverty, lack of food availability, etc. He said this type of planning fits in with the City™s sustainability work and efforts to be more self-sufficient.

Mr. Duax asked about the Public Works Department™s work on requiring a grading permit.

11. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of April 2, 2012, were approved.

Tom Pearson
Secretary